



# CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

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## Department of Toxic Substances Control

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### **Bay Area Undercover Operation Nets Nine Law Breakers**

Oakland—"Got cha!" The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Alameda County District Attorney's Office have recently completed an undercover operation in the Bay Area that netted nine individuals who were willing to pick up and transport hazardous waste illegally.

The undercover operation was a cooperative effort between DTSC's Criminal Investigations Branch and the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. Also playing a major role in the operation was the City of Alameda Police Department, with assistance from the Alameda County Environmental Health Department.

"This represents a new direction and focus towards proactive environmental enforcement initiated by the Department's chief law enforcement officer, Chief Counsel, Tim Swickard," said DTSC Director B.B. Blevins. "Our Criminal Investigations Branch sought to catch those who flagrantly violate state laws regarding the transportation of hazardous waste. Individuals caught included those who are unlicensed, untrained, unregistered, and uninsured. Their illegal transportation of hazardous waste poses a significant risk to other drivers, and brings unfair competition to those who legally transport waste in our state," Blevins added.

Of twelve appointments made, only one individual refused to haul the waste. Each of the haulers put over 150 gallons of hazardous waste, in 29 containers, in their trucks and hauled it away for prices ranging from \$90 to \$200. After they loaded the waste on their trucks and drove outside the gate of the facility, marked patrol units immediately stopped them. The accused had a variety of explanations as to where they were going to get rid of the waste – from paying people to stand in line at a household hazardous waste deposit to "making it disappear."

The undercover operation has added another dimension to environmental enforcement efforts. Working jointly with local district attorneys, undercover operations like the one in Alameda County and another successful operation in Orange County which concluded two weeks ago, ensure the safe transport of hazardous waste by taking illegal transporters off the roads. DTSC Criminal Investigators called transporters who regulatory agencies had previously received complaints on or people who were advertising in local newspapers.

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Suspects were charged with a variety of crimes, including, illegal transportation of hazardous waste, transporting hazardous waste without registration, insurance and proper paperwork. Such violations of the law are punishable by time in jail with fines.

Previous state administrations have focused on regulating permitted facilities and authorized transporters; however, the Governor's Environmental Action Initiative seeks to level the environmental playing field by fostering an environment in which regulators can go after "illegal transporters and un-permitted facilities."

DTSC regulates the generation, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste within the State of California. DTSC ensures compliance with the Hazardous Waste Control Laws through regulations, inspections, and criminal investigations.

Business generated hazardous waste must generally be transported by a registered hazardous waste transporter and a California Uniform Waste manifest must be used. This helps track shipments and ensures proper disposal of hazardous waste. Through the proper handling of hazardous waste, threats to public health and the degradation of the environment can be avoided.

To find out if a hazardous waste transporter is registered or to find additional information about DTSC, please visit DTSC's website at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov). For complaints involving the illegal dumping, storage, or transportation of hazardous waste, please call 1-800-69-TOXIC.

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***The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.***